

WATER Center  
101 E. Pawnee  
Wichita, KS 67211  
Open 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on  
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays  
Closed Holidays  
(316) 337-9262  
Fax (316) 337-9266  
[www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Environmental/WATERCenter/](http://www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Environmental/WATERCenter/)



# H2O Happenings Observations

*A Quarterly Publication of the WATER Center*

January – March 2006

Volume 1, Issue 1

## Welcome to H2O!

Welcome to the first issue of  $H_2O$ , the quarterly newsletter for the **Wichita Area Treatment, Education and Remediation (WATER) Center**.

One of Wichita’s best-kept secrets, the WATER Center boasts the city’s largest public aquarium, a free, hands-on water education museum, trails, fountains and more.

The Center exists to limit the spread of and to clean up, or remediate, the contaminated groundwater of the Gilbert-Mosley Project.

Decades of industrial and commercial activities played a major role in the groundwater contamination

under downtown Wichita. Discovered in the late 1980’s, the impacted site was dubbed the Gilbert-Mosley Project.

A portion of the WATER Center houses the equipment needed to clean the polluted groundwater and is designed to encourage public interest on how groundwater is remediated.

The other half of the remediation system consists of five and one-half miles of conveyance piping and thirteen extraction wells in the Gilbert-Mosley Project area, which extract and convey the polluted groundwater to the WATER Center treatment facility.

The WATER Center offers many opportunities for

visitors to learn about water conservation, aquatic wildlife and pollution prevention.

Count on  $H_2O$  to bring you stories about water issues and future announcements on youth and adult education program opportunities.



### What’s Inside?

- **Where Do They Go? Hibernation Secrets of Aquatic Turtles**
- **NEW! “Water on the Web” Exhibit**
- **Senior Wednesday**
- **Meetings and Events**
- **Program Schedule**

### What’s New?

#### Recognized for Innovation

In the last few months of 2005, the City of Wichita and its consultant, CDM, received two prestigious awards for the Gilbert-Mosley/WATER Center Project.

*2005 National Groundwater Association “Outstanding Groundwater Project Award”*

&

*American City & County’s “2005 American Crown Community”*



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Closed Holidays

The **WATER Center**  
is located in:  
**Herman Hill Park**

Open daily sunrise to sunset  
18-hole disc golf course  
Accessible trails  
Playground equipment  
Picnic areas

Skateboarding, swimming and fishing are prohibited



## PROGRAM REGISTRATION

**Participant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ Circle one: M F  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Telephone:** Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening: \_\_\_\_\_  
**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Check one: ☒ Over 18 years old ☐ Under 18, what age: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Leader Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

### I PLAN TO ATTEND THESE PROGRAMS:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DATE	PROGRAM	TIME	AGE	COST
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	January 13	Youth Volunteer Day	9-11 AM	Ages 8-15	Free
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	January 13	Youth Volunteer Day	1-3 PM	Ages 8-15	Free
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	March 9th	Go In-Seine!	3:30-4:30 PM	Grade 6-8	\$ 2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	March 17	Youth Volunteer Day	9-11 AM	Ages 8-15	Free
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	March 17	Youth Volunteer Day	1-3 PM	Ages 8-15	Free
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	March 23	Who’s Clues?	3:30-4:30 PM	Grade 2-3	\$ 2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	March 30	Water Ya Know?	3:30-4:30 PM	Grade 4-5	\$ 2

### REGISTRATION COMPLETION:

Program Fee Totals \_\_\_\_\_. Make check payable to the **WATER Center**.

**Mail Registration and Fees to: PROGRAMS, WATER Center,  
101 E. Pawnee, Wichita, KS 67211  
Or Fax: 316-337-9266**

Youth Volunteer Days

Youth Volunteer Days are for children **ages 8-15** years old. Registration is required. There will be youth volunteer activities from **9 a.m. – 11 a.m.** and from **1 p.m. until 3 p.m.** on the following days:

**Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup>**  
Project: Museum reorganization and create additional displays.

**Friday, March 17<sup>th</sup>**  
Project: Trim back stream plants and perform any needed stream repair or clean-up.

Meetings & Events

Visitors are welcome to attend any of the following meetings held each month at the WATER Center.

January

- 4<sup>th</sup> District III Advisory Board 6:30-9:30 PM
- 11<sup>th</sup> Wichita Area Paddlers 6:30-9:00 PM
- 20<sup>th</sup> Arkansas River Coalition 6:30-9:30 PM

February

- 1<sup>st</sup> District III Advisory Board 6:30-9:30 PM
- 8<sup>th</sup> Wichita Area Paddlers 6:30-9:00 PM
- 17<sup>th</sup> Arkansas River Coalition 6:30-9:30 PM

March

- 1<sup>st</sup> District III Advisory Board 6:30-9:30 PM
- 8<sup>th</sup> Wichita Area Paddlers 6:30-9:00 PM
- 17<sup>th</sup> Arkansas River Coalition 6:30-9:30 PM

Program Schedule

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Registration Required ~ Space is Limited  
All Programs: 3:30-4:30 PM

GO IN-SEINE!

**Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>**  
**Grade: 6-8<sup>th</sup>, Fee: \$ 2.00**  
How many kinds of fish are in the river? What is the most common...the most rare? Think you know? Slip on some waders and go seining with the WATER Center staff to discover the answers.

WHO'S CLUES?

**Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Grade: 2-3<sup>rd</sup>, Fee: \$ 2.00**  
Put on your detective hat and explore the WATER Center wetlands to finds signs of what lives here.

WATER YA KNOW?

**Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Grade: 4-5<sup>th</sup>, Fee: \$ 2.00**  
Ever wanted to become a *Mad Scientist*? Perform weird experiments on water to see what it can do and what makes it so unique.

- KACEE and Green Topeka (NOTE: Tuition provided to first 20 to enroll, fee of \$25/participant after first 20)
- Be eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$200 to implement a waterspout garden at your school
  - Have the opportunity to receive one graduate credit (additional fee)
  - Receive a free hands on curriculum guide with activities correlated to state education standards

~Senior Wednesdays~

No Registration Required

INTRODUCTION TO GEOLOGY

**Wednesday, January 4<sup>th</sup>**  
**1:30 – 3:00 PM, Free**  
Rock and Roll! Well, rock, roll, minerals and fossils, to be exact! Come learn about geology and what goes on underground. Bring a your own specimens and "stump" our geologist!

PAINT WITH THE EARTH

**Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**1:30 – 3:00 PM, Free**  
Soil is one of our most important natural resources in Kansas. It is responsible for

our healthy crops, diverse prairies and rich wetlands. The colors and textures of our native soils vary dramatically across the state. Create a painting using soil as a pigment for unusual colors and textures.

SMART KANSAS LANDSCAPES

**Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**  
**1:30 – 3:00 PM, Free**  
Love your garden? Hate your water bill? Think Xeriscape is only ugly rocks and cacti? You can have any manner of home landscape with a bit of planning and common sense horticultural practices.

Ripple Effects

“For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.”  
~ Sir Isaac Newton

When you toss a pebble into a pond, ripples radiate across the surface. Sure, there is a scientific explanation for why the waves appear, but have you ever thought how this little action mirrors the cause and effect of our community’s actions and choices and the results that follow?

This section of *H<sub>2</sub>O* will be devoted to stories about little things in the environmental field that have had a broad effect. These stories will have a local impact but far-reaching results.

If you know of someone or something that has created a positive environmental ripple effect in our community and should be featured in *H<sub>2</sub>O*, contact the WATER Center at 316-337-9262.

Where Do They Go?

When winter’s cold temperatures blow in and water temperatures drop, our native aquatic wildlife disappears for the season.

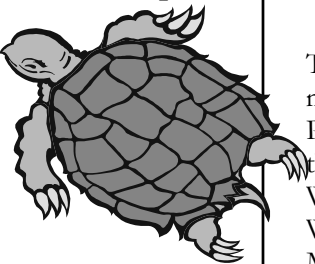
Many animals in Kansas’ waters are cold-blooded (ectothermic), meaning that the environment determines their body temperature.

When temperatures drop below the freezing mark, specialized adaptations, combined with the unique properties of water help these creatures survive until spring.

So how does the red-eared slider, a native aquatic turtle, survive? Sliders retreat underwater and into the mud. Unlike amphibians, they cannot absorb oxygen through their skin. Instead, the turtle’s metabolism slows and its heart

rate drops to only one beat every ten minutes. It also has special zones in its throat and cloacae that extract oxygen from the mud. To avoid the harmful buildup of lactic acid in its body, small amounts of the calcium salts in its shell are dissolved into its bloodstream.

As the water begins to warm, the turtles will leave the mud. On warm winter days, you may even see a few out basking on logs before the cold temperatures return.



Water On The Web

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) partnered with the City of Wichita to create the newest educational exhibit installation at the WATER Center.

Ever wondered what the water level of the Arkansas River is? Or why agencies monitor the water quality in our streams? Or what the worst flood was to hit Wichita?

All of these answers and more can be found in the WATER Center’s newest interactive exhibit, “Water on the Web.”



The new exhibit, a bright computer kiosk, stands just inside the main entrance. With just a touch of the computer screen you will enter the world of water!

And, to get a real feel of how a flood would affect Wichita, walk outside the WATER Center and view the high water mark placed by the USGS showing the River’s height in the flood of 1877.

WATER Center Staff

The WATER Center is a project of the City of Wichita’s Department of Environmental Services  
“Protecting Health – Preserving the Environment”



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Senior Wednesday

Coalition Receives  
Kansas Health Foundation  
Recognition Grant

The Senior Wednesday Coalition, made up of CityArts, Exploration Place, the Sedgwick County Zoo, the Ulrich Museum of Art at Wichita State University, the WATER Center, the Wichita Art Museum, the Wichita Public Library and the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum, offers monthly programs for adults over the age of fifty-five.

Awarded twice a year, Kansas Health Foundation Recognition Grants support grassroots organizations across the state promoting health in Kansas.

This program directly impacts the health of senior adults by enhancing their quality of life through community involvement, lifelong learning and the opportunity to socialize with other senior adults.



Did You Know?

Industries as well as people need water. It takes on average **39,090 gallons of water to manufacture a new car and its four tires.**

~EPA, December 1999